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THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

IV. ATONEMENT IN NON-CANONICAL JEWISH LITERATURE

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In the first three articles of this series Dr. Smith has traced the history of the idea of atonement for sin through the canonical books of the Old Testament. But contemporary with the latest of these books, and subsequent to them down to and overlapping the period of the rise of the New Testament books, is a body of Jewish religious writings which cannot be overlooked in a study of the biblical idea of atonement. For though these writings have not been taken up into our Bible as the limits of the canon are defined by Protestants—several of them are in the canon of the Roman Catholic church—yet none the less they reflect Jewish thought of the period preceding and contemporary with the rise of Christianity. And this being the case, they belong to the sources of our knowledge concerning that movement of thought which we are studying, and which assuredly did not cease when the last of those books subsequently taken up into the Old Testament canon was written, to be resumed only when the earliest New Testament book was written or the earliest New Testament sermon was preached. On the contrary it was continuous even through the period once wrongly called the four centuries of silence. It is the purpose of the present article to set forth the ideas of atonement which are expressed in this non-canonical Jewish literature of the period approximately 200 B. C. to 100 A. D.

One of the most notable facts respecting the Jewish thought about atonement as reflected in this literature is the small place which that thought apparently gave to the sacrifices.

From the restoration of the temple in the days of Zerubbabel till its destruction in 70 A. D., temple worship, including sacrifice, continued practically without interruption. With the exception of the three years from the desecration of the altar in 168 to its restoration in 165 B. C. the daily sacrifices failed not, so far as we know, for a period

of nearly 600 years, 516 B. C. to 70 A. D. First and Second Maccabees bear abundant evidence that the loyal Jews of the second century B. C. were zealous for the temple and the sacrifices, and the victory of the Maccabees was in no small part a victory for the temple.

With these facts before us it might seem as if the temple was the center of Judaism, and sacrifice the central element of the Jewish religion. This, however, is very far from being the case. Two facts of this period must be remembered, the rise of the synagogue and the practical triumph of legalism. Throughout by far the larger part of the period of which we are speaking the real center of the religious life of the Jewish people was the synagogue rather than the temple. And the synagogue was under the control of Pharisaism, and Pharisaism was fundamentally neither ritual nor spiritually ethical, but legalistic. This does not signify that the sacrifices were neglected. On the contrary they were diligently and enthusiastically observed. A large body of priests offered not only the daily sacrifices, but the multitudes of offerings made by pilgrims from afar on the occasion of the great feasts. Nor does it signify that Pharisaism was opposed to sacrifice. It means that the sacrifices were taken up into the legal system, and that so far as they were not simply acts of worship having no theological significance, they were looked upon purely from the point of view of legalism. Sacrifices were to be offered, not because of any inherent virtue in them, but as the sabbath, and the fasts were observed, because the law required it and God demanded obedience to the law.

Bousset, speaking of the rites of the synagogue, says:

The new religion was a religion of observance, which along with many other things had taken up into itself the content of the cult-piety which was already devoid of vital force and hastening to death. And this is the real reason that the cult maintained itself at all in that uncontested respect which it undoubtedly enjoyed. It retained its standing not on its own account, but in consequence of the authority of the law. The requirements of the cult were and remained a part of the great incomprehensible divine will as this was expressed in the law. Cult was no longer the basis and support of piety, but legal piety instead was the support of the cult.¹

A striking evidence of the correctness of this statement of Bousset,

¹ Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 2d ed., p. 134. The context shows that by "cult" Bousset means particularly the sacrifices.

which shows also that it applies even to the pre-Maccabean period, is furnished in Sir. 35:1-7:

1. He that keepeth the law multiplieth offerings,
He that taketh heed to the commandments sacrificeth a peace offering.
2. He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour;
And he that giveth alms sacrificeth a thank offering.
3. To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord,
And to depart from unrighteousness is a propitiation (*ἐξιλασμός*).
4. See that thou appear not in the presence of the Lord empty.
5. For all these things are to be done because of the commandments.
6. The offering of the righteous maketh the altar fat;
And the sweet savor thereof is before the Most High.
7. The sacrifice of a righteous man is acceptable;
And the memorial thereof shall not be forgotten.

The first three verses affirm that keeping of the law and doing righteousness constitute the acceptable offerings to God. The sentences must not be reversed; the thought is not that he that multiplieth offerings keepeth the law, and he that sacrificeth a peace offering taketh heed to the commandments. The author is not exalting sacrifice, but on the contrary depreciating it, affirming that keeping the law and doing righteousness are the things that make one acceptable to God. The meaning of vss. 4-7 is not wholly clear. If the words "offering" and "sacrifice" be interpreted in the light of the preceding verses as referring to acts of righteousness, then the later verses only reinforce the thought of the earlier ones. If the words be taken in their literal sense, vss. 4-7 supplement vss. 1-3 by affirming that though unimportant as compared with the keeping of (other) commandments and almsgiving, sacrifices are nevertheless to be offered. Upon the latter interpretation, however, the bringing of offerings is enjoined simply on the legalistic ground that the law commands it. Sacrifice is not as such propitiatory; propitiation is achieved by departing from unrighteousness (vs. 3); sacrifices are to be offered because the law requires them, and from a *righteous man* are acceptable.

In the preceding chapters the other side, the uselessness of sacrifice on the part of the wicked, is set forth, repeating in effect the teaching of the prophets.²

² Cf., e. g., Isa., chap. 1.

The Most High hath no pleasure in the offerings of the ungodly;
Neither is he pacified for sins by the multitude of sacrifices.
As he that killeth the son before his father's eyes

Is he that bringeth a sacrifice from the goods of the poor. (Sir. 34:19.)

The chief thought of the writer is of course that sacrifice is unavailing for a man who is continuing in his sins. Yet it is not enough to say that he denies that sacrifices alone, without righteousness, avail to make one acceptable to God; this he does not so much say as take for granted. Atoning value lies for him not at all in the sacrifices as such, but wholly in righteousness and obedience to the law. Sacrifices are of significance only as a part of legalism, and have no other value than any other acts of obedience to law. And this is the doctrine of the book throughout. The writer approves of the priesthood and the sacrificial system (7:31 ff.; 14:11; 38:11 ff.; 45:6-22) and men are even enjoined in time of sickness to couple with repentance, and the aid of the physician, an offering, as means of averting death. Yet the sacrifices are as a whole simply a part of what the law requires and their offering is chiefly for the benefit of the priesthood, i. e., for the maintenance of the cult. To atone for sins or to make peace with God they are of no value save as obedience to the statutes of the law, and indeed of less value than other acts of righteousness.

If we turn from this book which stands at the beginning of our period to one which belongs near its close, the so-called II (or IV) Esdras, we find here an even more marked absence of any dependence upon the sacrifices as a basis of atonement. This is doubtless due in no small measure to the fact that the book was written after the fall of Jerusalem, when, the temple no longer standing, sacrifices could no longer be offered. Yet it remains a significant indication of the relatively unimportant place which the sacrifices had filled in the Jewish thought concerning the basis of atonement that in a book written within a decade or two after the destruction of the temple, and dealing specifically with the problem of sin and its consequences, and especially the sin of Israel, there is not a single direct or indirect reference to sacrifice, beyond the bare mention of the fact that the altar is broken down and the temple destroyed (10:21).

Nor does the literature of the period disclose any considerable divergence from the legalistic attitude toward the sacrifices. The book of Sirach, indeed, says of Aaron:

He chose him out of all living
 To offer sacrifice to the Lord,
 Incense and a sweet savour, for a memorial
 To make reconciliation (*ἐξιλάσκεισθαι*) for thy people (45:16).

But he continues immediately:

He gave unto him his commandments,
 Authority in the covenants of judgments,
 To teach Jacob the testimonies,
 And to enlighten Israel in his law (45:17).

Jochanan ben Zakkai also (about 70 A. D.) calls the altar "the sign of reconciliation" and says of the stones that they bring reconciliation between Israel and the heavenly Father,³ and Rabbi Joshua, according to tradition, lamented the destruction of the temple, saying, "Woe is us, because the place is destroyed at which the sins of Israel were atoned for." Yet it is to be observed that this language does not, at least in the case of the son of Sirach, go beyond the distinctly legal point of view already ascribed to him; moreover, that taken at its highest valuation the altar has to do with the relation of Israel as a whole to God and not with that of the individual.

The idea of atonement for the sins of the individual through sacrifice is expressed, however, in one book of the later pre-Talmudic literature. In II Maccabees (written about 90 B. C.), we read that when Heliodorus, having essayed to seize the treasures on deposit in the temple, was smitten and brought to utter helplessness,

certain of Heliodorus's familiar friends besought Onias to call upon the Most High, and grant life to him who lay quite at the last gasp. And the high-priest . . . brought a sacrifice for the deliverance of the man. But as the high-priest was making the propitiation, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus . . . and said, Give Onias, the high-priest, great thanks, for for his sake the Lord hath granted thee life (3:31-33).

Again, speaking of certain soldiers of Judas who had fallen in battle, and under whose garments there were found tokens of heathen idols, the author says that the survivors

betook themselves unto supplication beseeching that the sin committed might be wholly blotted out. . . . And when Judas had made a collection man by man to the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver he sent unto Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice for sin, doing therein right well and honorably in that he took thought for a resurrection. For if he were not expecting that they that were fallen would rise again, it were superfluous and idle to pray for the dead (12:42-44).

³ Bousset, 2d ed., p. 228, citing from Tosephta Baba K. VII. 3.

It is notable that in neither of these cases does the offender himself bring the sacrifice; personal repentance is apparently excluded. It looks as if the sacrifice had intrinsic propitiatory value. But on the other hand the second passage suggests that the sacrifice was conceived of as a prayer offered by the survivors for their companions who, they believed, had lost their lives because of their unfaithfulness to Jehovah. And the first passage read in the light of this seems also to convey a similar thought. It is for the sake of Onias, who offered the sacrifice, that the Lord grants Heliodorus life. While therefore these passages are sufficient to show that at least as late as a century before the Christian era (and doubtless much later) sacrifice was by some conceived to have propitiatory value, even apart from the repentance of the sinner, they contain no clear theory as to how the sacrifices effect their result. They are elements of a legalistic system, or have the value of intercessory prayer. Expiatory value is never ascribed to them.

If from the incomplete and not wholly consistent evidence we conclude that probably throughout this period there persisted among the people, perhaps encouraged by the priests, the idea that sacrifice atoned for sin, with a more or less indefinite theory as to how it accomplished this, this is but the continuation of what we have seen to have existed in the Old Testament periods (cf. March issue of this journal, p. 216). Sacrifices were undoubtedly offered: regularly by the priests for the people; in connection with the feasts; as special thank-offerings; and sometimes as means of deliverance for those who for their sins had fallen under the special wrath of God. How these latter sacrifices, or indeed the other, became effective—of this little is said in the extant literature. But there is distinct protest against the idea, which therefore was probably more or less common, that sacrifices possessed an intrinsic value, even aside from repentance and righteous conduct. This denial of intrinsic value to the sacrifices, repeating the teaching of the pre-exilic prophets, is the *teaching* of the period, so far as it has come down to us; the faith in them is the more or less prevalent error of the time against which the successors of the prophets protest as the prophets before them had done. In short, we find sacrifices as a part of an accepted legalistic system, and protest, in the spirit of the old prophets, against reliance upon them as having intrinsic atoning value.

But it is not in connection with the sacrifices only that we must seek for the thought of the Judaism of the Maccabean and New Testament period in respect to atonement. For there are traces in Jewish literature of this period of the idea that the suffering and death of men effect the escape of others from punishment or disaster. This takes place however not through human sacrifice, of which there are occasional traces in the Old Testament, but through the voluntary death of members of the community. Whether the idea as found in the later Jewish books is developed from the germ contained in the conception of the suffering servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, chap. 53, or under the influence of pagan ideas, the conception appears at any rate in a few passages of this period. Josephus, *Ant.*, i, 13, 3, puts into the mouth of Abraham the statement that Isaac offered in sacrifice will inure to his advantage, but without a hint that the death of Isaac is of advantage to him because of any expiatory value that it possessed. The language is:

And since thou wast born, die not by the common way of departing from life, but by thine own father sent forward to God the father of all, by the law of sacrifice, since he (God), I suppose hath decreed that thou shalt depart from life not by disease or war or any of the other calamities that are wont to befall men, and expects thy soul with prayers and the offices of religion, and will place thee by himself. And thou, for my protector and guardian of my old age—for this especially did I bring thee up—thou shalt have procured me God instead of thyself.

The second book of Maccabees, speaking of the death of the seven sons of a widow who were slain by Antiochus for their fidelity to the Jewish religion, reports that the last one of the seven spoke thus to the tyrant:

For we are suffering because of our own sins; and if for rebuke and chastening our living Lord hath been angered a little while, yet shall he again be reconciled (*καταλλάγησεται*) with his own servants. . . . But I, as my brethren, give up both body and soul for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God that he may speedily become gracious to the nation (*ἵλεως τάχυν τῷ ἔθνει γενέσθαι*); and that thou amidst trials and plagues mayest confess that he alone is God; and that in me and my brethren thou mayest stay [*or, there may be stayed*] the wrath of the Almighty, which hath been justly brought upon our whole race (II Macc. 7:32. 33, 37, 38).

The so-called Fourth book of Maccabees (written probably between 60 B. C. and 70 A. D.) records this as the prayer of the martyr:

Thou O God knowest that I might have delivered myself, but under the torments of the fire I am dying, for the sake of the law. Be gracious to thy people. Let the punishment suffice thee which I for them endure. For a purification let my blood serve them, and as a substitute for their lives take my life (6:27-29).⁴

The author himself says:

But because of their courage and endurance admired not only by all men but even by their tormentors, have they become the cause that tyranny which was endured by the people has come to naught, they having conquered the tyrant by their endurance, so that through them the fatherland was purified (1:11).

And again:

These therefore for God's sake sanctified, have been honored not only with this honor, but also in this that for their sakes the enemy had no more power over our people, and that the tyrant was punished and the fatherland purified, they becoming as it were a substitute⁵ (*ἀντίψυχον*) for the sins of the people through the blood of those pious ones, and through their reconciling death (*ἱλαστηρίου θανάτου*) the divine providence has rescued the hitherto sadly oppressed Israel. For the tyrant Antiochus turned his attention to the manliness of their courage and to their steadfastness under torture, and proclaimed to his soldiers their steadfastness as an example (17:20-22).

These passages do not seem to yield a perfectly clear and self-consistent view. Even the passages in IV Macc. waver between two views, or seek to combine them. There is probably truth in the remark of Deissmann:⁶

ἡ ζωὴς γενοῦ τῷ ἔθνει σου, ἀρκεσθῆις τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ περὶ αὐτῶν δίκῃ. Καθάρισον αὐτῶν ποίησον τὸ ἐμὸν αἷμα, καὶ ἀντίψυχον αὐτῶν λάβε τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν.

⁵ The translation of *ἀντίψυχον* (6:29; 17:22) by "substitute" is not quite accurate and is liable to mislead, but is used for lack of a better term. All the observed instances of the word occur within about two centuries, the present passages being the earliest, followed by Ign. *Eph.*, 21:1; *Smyrn.*, 10:2; *Polyc.* 2:3; 6:1; Luc. *Lex.* 10; Dio Cass., 59:8. These examples show that the word is an adjective equivalent to *δοθεὶς ἀντὶ ψυχῆς* (not to *ψυχῇ δοθεῖσα ἀντὶ*); see especially Luc. *Lex.* 10: *χρήματα ἀντίψυχα διδόναι ἠθέλεν*. Cf. for such compounds with similar force of this preposition *ἀντίδουλος*, *ἀντικοσμητής*, *ἀντιπάθειος*. The word is probably much older than the earliest extant examples. In IV Macc. and Ign. it is employed as a neuter substantive. In Ign. it bears a somewhat attenuated sense, meaning *given on behalf of, a thing devoted to* (another) without implying apparently that the life of that other is thereby saved (cf. Zahn on Ign. *Eph.* 8:1 and Lightfoot's translation). In IV Macc. it is probably used in its proper sense, *a thing given for a life*, and with reference to the fact that the martyr is saving the life of his fellow-countrymen. It is the context, not the word, which conveys the thought that he does this by giving his own life in death, and which shows *how* his death was conceived to secure the life of his fellows.

⁶ Kautzsch, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, Vol. II, p. 160, footnote.

These passages are important for the understanding of the thought of the representative character of the sufferings of the righteous. It is evident that the whole thought arose not as a fixed dogma, but perfectly clearly through the mystical and acute intuition of religious pathos.

In other words, these passages reflect not a clearly formed doctrine, but a thought concerning the meaning of suffering arising under especial and exceptional circumstances, and not unnaturally combine views not wholly assimilated to one another.⁷ On the one side the death of the martyr is represented as sufficiently meeting God's demands because of the sin of the people (IV Macc. 6:27); and on the other it averts further evil by the effect which the spectacle of the courage and devotion of the martyr has upon the mind of the tyrant (17:23). If these two conceptions are to be blended in one, this would yield the thought that God in his providence permitted these to suffer that under the influence of their courage and fidelity to the law the tyrant might be moved to stay his hand; and that their death became propitiatory in that it furnished to God the means by which he might check the persecuting hand of the tyrant. It is perhaps in favor of this view that the writer in vss. 22, 23 connects the substitutionary suffering and propitiatory death of the martyr, the providence of God, and the effect of their courage on the mind of the tyrant. Yet the course of thought as expressed is not transparently clear, and it is perhaps most probable that the writer has conjoined different points of view without thoroughly harmonizing them. If then there are two points of view not wholly assimilated, it is with the first of them that we are specially concerned. It is clearly said that by the death of the martyrs further suffering is averted from the nation and their blood therefore given for the life of the nation, and their death propitiatory. Yet this is not in the sense that the place of the guilty is taken by other and wholly innocent persons. For those who suffer are a part of those who have sinned. In II Macc. the martyr included himself in the sinful nation of whom therefore he is the representative. In IV Macc. he prays that the punishment which he and his brothers voluntarily endure may suffice to meet the demands of God. The whole passage implies not that they have endured the equivalent of that which was due the nation, but that

⁷ Cf. Dr. Smith's remarks on Isa., chap. 53, *Biblical World*, February, 1908, p. 119.

they represent the nation, and that their representative suffering is graciously accepted by God. Whether the thought of the writer goes beyond this and includes some explanation of how the suffering of a few suffices does not clearly appear. It is clear only that the idea of substitution is qualified by that of representation.

Possibly we may discover in this passage the germ of that conception which more or less dominated later Jewish thought, that a man's standing before God is determined by the amount of good works to his credit. These good works are primarily a man's own deeds of obedience to the law. But as it became impossible not to recognize that so tested men fell short of full satisfaction of the law's demands there arose the theory, which eventually became a distinct element of later Jewish theology, that the man who is deficient in good works may draw upon the superabundant good works of the fathers. As a specific form of this idea it is occasionally said that the sufferings of the innocent, even of children dying in infancy, count also as a treasure to be credited to others.⁸ But this idea of the merits of the fathers was not in New Testament times a controlling thought. Still less so was the notion of merit through suffering. The passages in the books of Maccabees referring, it will be observed, exclusively to the case of the seven martyrs put to death by Antiochus, show us only the possible early beginnings of this idea, but by no means reflect a definitely framed doctrine.

It is perhaps quite as likely that the underlying thought of the Maccabean passages is that which is implied in a notable passage in Sirach:

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar is the third in glory,
In that he was zealous in the fear of the Lord,
And stood fast in the good forwardness of his soul when the people turned
away.

And he made reconciliation (*ἑξίλασται*) for Israel (45:23).

The passage is evidently based upon Num. 25:11:

Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I consumed not the children of Israel.

⁸ See Weber, *Die Lehre des Talmud*, pp. 314 ff., 320 f.; Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 2d ed., pp. 228 f.

Phinehas had slain an Israelite and a Midianitish woman whom the Israelite had brought into the camp. "So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel." The explanation given by the author of Numbers is that by his act Phinehas had manifested God's displeasure against sin even as Jehovah himself felt it; and that this manifestation of divine wrath sufficed, so that further exhibition of it was unnecessary. This is evidently also the view of the son of Sirach, who adds expressly that thus Phinehas made reconciliation for Israel. Phinehas made atonement not by suffering but by the infliction of suffering, and this act has its value in its revelation of the divine attitude toward sin. It is probably too much to affirm with confidence that this idea was also in the mind of the author of II and IV Maccabees. But it is evident that such a doctrine would account both for the Sirach and Maccabean passage and that it is as old as Num. 25:11. Manifestation of the divine wrath against sin, whether through the infliction or the endurance of suffering for sin, suffices to make further punishment unnecessary. He who accomplishes such revelation of the divine wrath makes atonement.

But if the forgiveness of the sin of the individual is not achieved through sacrifice, and if the suffering or righteous zeal of individuals for God avails for their brethren only in the sense that through the manifestation of the divine displeasure with sin thus accomplished the nation as a whole is spared further expression of God's wrath, how was the Jew of the Maccabean and New Testament period taught to expect to secure the forgiveness of his sins?

The Wisdom of the son of Sirach is quite clear on this point. Sin is forgiven because of subsequent righteousness, especially because of almsgiving. Righteousness makes atonement for sins.

He that honoreth his father shall make atonement for sins (3:3).

For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten
And instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up.
In the day of thine affliction it shall remember thee;
As fair weather upon ice,
So shall thy sins also melt away (3:13-15).

Water will quench a flaming fire;
And almsgiving will make atonement for sins (3:30).

Concerning atonement (*ἐξίλασμοῦ*), be not without fear,
To add sin upon sins (5:5).

Sin not against the multitude of the city,
And cast not thyself down in the crowd.
Bind not up sin twice;
For in one sin thou shalt not be unpunished.
Say not, He will look upon the multitude of my gifts,
And when I offer to the Most High God, he will accept it.
Be not fainthearted in thy prayer;
And neglect not to give alms (7: 7-10).

Fear the Lord with all thy soul;
And reverence his priests (17:29).

Before judgment examine thyself;
And in the hour of visitation thou shalt find forgiveness (*εὐρήσεις ἐξίλασμόν*).
Humble thyself before thou be sick;
And in the time of sins shew repentance.
Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vow in due time;
And wait not until death to be justified (18:20-22).

My son, hast thou sinned? add no more thereto;
And make supplication for thy former sins (21:1).

He that taketh away vengeance shall find vengeance from the Lord;
And he will surely make firm his sins.
Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done thee;
And then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest.
Man cherisheth anger against man;
And doth he seek healing from the Lord?
Upon a man like himself he hath no mercy;
And doth he make supplication for his own sins?
He being himself flesh nourisheth wrath;
Who shall make atonement for (*ἐξιλάσεται*) his sins? (28:1-5).

This is also the doctrine of the book of Tobit:

Give alms of thy substance, and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious; turn not away thy face from any poor man, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. As thy substance is, give alms of it according to thine abundance: if thou have little, be not afraid to give alms according to that little: for thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity: because alms delivereth from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness. Alms is a good gift in the sight of the Most High for all that give it (4:7-11).

Good is prayer with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to pay up gold; alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin. They that do alms and righteousness shall be filled with life; but they that sin are enemies to their own life (12:8-10).

The Prayer of Manasseh, of uncertain date, but probably belonging to our period, lays all stress upon repentance as the condition of forgiveness, making no mention of sacrifice or other means of obtaining it.

I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: but I humbly beseech thee; forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities. Be not angry with me forever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me to the lower parts of the earth. For thou, O Lord, art the God of them that repent.

The Psalms of the Pharisees express reverence for the altar and the sacrifices, but make repentance, righteousness, and fasting the ground of forgiveness.

They went up to the altar from every kind of uncleanness: yea even in their separation they polluted the sacrifices, eating them like profane meat (8:13).

Whoso doeth righteousness layeth up for himself life at the Lord's hand: and whoso doeth wickedness is guilty of his own soul to destroy it.

For the judgments of the Lord are in righteousness according to each man and his house.

With whom wilt thou deal kindly, O God, save with them that call upon the Lord?

He will cleanse the soul that hath sinned, if it make confession and acknowledgment.

For upon us and upon our faces is shame because of all these things.

And to whom will he forgive sins save unto them that have committed sin?

The righteous thou wilt bless and wilt not call them to account for the sins that they have committed: and thy kindness is in respect to those that sin, if they repent (9:9-15).

The righteous man maketh inquisition continually in his house that he may put away iniquity.

When he falleth into transgression he atoneth for his sin of ignorance⁹ by fasting, and will humble his soul (3:8, 9).

⁹ Ryle and James read, "With his trespass offering he maketh atonement for that wherein he erreth unwittingly, and with fasting he afflicteth his soul." But this (*a*) requires emendation of the text, *ἐν παραπτώματι αὐτοῦ ἐξιλάσατο περὶ ἀγνοίας ἐν νηστεία*

If then we attempt to state the view of atonement that is reflected in the literature of this period it is this: Peace between God and the nation is maintained through the keeping of the law, of which sacrifice forms a part, but not an especially conspicuous part. When God is especially angry with the people for their sins he may be reconciled by a conspicuous act of righteousness on the part of some member of the nation, or a manifestation of the righteous attitude of God toward men in the suffering or death of representatives of the people. As respects the individual, there still remain traces of the idea, which the prophets had denounced, that sacrifice has intrinsic atoning value. But such traces appear chiefly in the opposition to such a conception. The writers of the period, with one exception, teach that for the individual atonement is effected through repentance and righteous living. The definition of what constitutes righteous living is partly ethical in the proper sense, partly legalistic. Of all righteous deeds almsgiving was apparently thought of as most effective for securing the divine favor.

καὶ ταπεινώσει τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ by the transposition of *καὶ* and *ἐν νηστείᾳ*, and (b) involves the assumption that the translator misunderstood his Hebrew original and having before him perhaps *כַּפָּרָה* mistakenly took it to mean sin instead of sin offering; (c) yields a meaning less consonant with the thought of these psalms as elsewhere expressed and with the general thought of the times than do the words as they stand unamended. Gebhardt rejects the emendation of Ryle and James, but for *τὴν ψυχὴν* reads *τῆς ψυχῆς*. This yields the meaning, "he atones for his sin of ignorance by fasting and humiliation of his soul." With *ἐν παραπτώματι*, cf. *ἐν ἁμαρτίαις*, 9:12. On the thought of the passage cf. vs. 4; 9:12-15; Tobit 12:8 ff.